



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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Kind, House Democrats Launch Online Forum on College Affordability

*College Students, Parents Encouraged to Submit Online
Testimony on Making College More Affordable*

Washington, D.C. – With college costs skyrocketing over the last several years – increasing by more than 40 percent at four-year public colleges since 2001 – Rep. Ron Kind and House Democrats have launched a national online forum to give college students and parents the opportunity to communicate directly with Congress on how the rising costs of college tuition and mounting student loan debt have affected their lives.

“Now more than ever, affordable college opportunities are critical to our nation’s ability to remain number one in a competitive global economy. However, as college costs continue to climb at staggering rates, more students and families are unable to afford a higher education or are facing unprecedented amounts of student loan debt,” said Rep. Ron Kind, a member of the House Education and Workforce Committee, who is joining several of his House colleagues in hosting the forum. “Congress can make college more affordable, and this issue demands continued attention and debate. Through this online forum, we will make the voices of all Americans facing the challenges of how to pay for college heard.”

Over the next ten days, the lawmakers will invite e-testimony from college students and parents. The House lawmakers have also invited student group representatives and experts to submit statements. Among those participating is Anya Kamenetz, the author of [Generation Debt: Why Now is A Terrible Time To Be Young](#).

Today, students graduate from college with an average of \$17,500 in debt. Unfortunately, Republicans in Congress have failed to make college affordability a priority. In February, Congress cut \$12 billion out of the federal student aid programs in the largest raid on student aid ever. Just last month, House Republicans rejected a Democratic proposal to make college more affordable by halving interest rates on subsidized student loans—those that go to students most in need.

Democrats believe that reducing the costs of college for students and families is vital to ensuring America’s economic competitiveness and continued prosperity. Furthermore, today's college graduates earn over \$1 million more over their lifetimes than those without college degrees.

(more)

Kind is supporting the Reverse the Raid on Student Aid Act of 2006, introduced last week, by Rep. George Miller (D-CA) and Senator Durbin (D-IL) in a new effort to cut interest rates in half on college loans for student borrowers with the most financial need and for parent borrowers. Under this new legislation, the typical undergraduate student borrower with \$17,500 in student loan debt would save \$5,600 over the life of his or her loan.

“Democrats have a plan to make college more affordable for students and parents by cutting interest rates on student loans in half, and we will continue to fight to make college an affordable option for all students who want an education,” said Kind.

The Democratic lawmakers sponsoring this e-hearing will write and distribute a report based on the testimony they receive, and they will enter the testimony into the official Congressional Record.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE E-HEARING

Current college students and parents may send written or video testimonies sharing their experiences in financing a college education and their thoughts about what Congress can do to improve college access and affordability for all Americans to CollegeForAll@mail.house.gov. Written testimony should be 500 words or less. Witnesses must include their name, college or university, home address, phone number, and email address (for verification purposes only); but only their name, hometown, and university will be posted along with their testimony. Video testimonies must be in Windows Media format, and no longer than 3 minutes. Please also include a transcript of the video. Submissions without complete contact information will not be posted.

The e-hearing can be accessed through Rep. Kind’s Web site at www.house.gov/kind.